United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council decides to reimpose sanctions against Haiti at midnight on 18 October unless parties to Governors Island Agreement and other Haitian authorities implement agreement to reinstate President Aristide's Government and allow UNMIH to carry out its mandate.

- Security Council, in Presidential statement, condemns blocking of Danube by two Serbian non-governmental organizations with acquiescence Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); demands that Federal Republic ensure free movement of international traffic on river.

- Secretary-General leaves New York for visit to Africa; to meet in Cairo tomorrow with Secretaries-General of OAU, Arab League, and Islamic Conference to address role of regional organizations in promoting political process in Somalia.

- General Assembly President hails "vision and sense of purpose in addressing the global agenda" as Assembly concludes general debate; 175 States participated.

- Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Nepal, Belize, Saudi Arabia, Equatorial Guinea and Liberia speak in general debate today.

- Samoa, Grenada, Malawi and Azerbaijan among speakers in general debate yesterday.

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The Security Council today decided to end the suspension of sanctions against Haiti set out in resolution 841 (1993) as of 2359 hours Eastern Standard Time on 18 October unless the Secretary-General reported that the parties to the Governors Island Agreement and any other authorities in Haiti were fully implementing the agreement to reinstate the Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and had established measures enabling the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) to carry out its mandate. The Council took

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that action, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 873 (1993).

The Council said that the Committee established by resolution 841 (1993) could grant certain exceptions to the prohibitions on a case-by-case basis under the no-objection prodcedure in response to requests by President Aristide or Prime Minister Robert Malval of Haiti. The Council said it would consider imposing additional measures if the Secretary-General informed it that the parties to the Governors Island Agreement or any other authorities in Haiti continued to impede UNMIH activities, or had not complied fully with relevant resolutions and the provisions of the Agreement.

In a report issued earlier today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said the Commander-in-Chief of Haiti's Armed Forces and the police chief and commander of the Port-au-Prince area had not fulfilled the commitments entered into under the Agreement. Monday's incidents in Haiti, in which armed civilian groups prevented a ship carrying a UNMIH contingent from landing in Port-au-Prince, were the culmination of a situation which had been deteriorating for weeks. He cited several other incidents as evidence, and said they reflected a lack of will on the part of the military authorities to "cooperate fully in the peaceful transition to...a democratic society". They also reflected the clear intent to prevent the democratic process, as accepted in the Agreement, from taking its course, he said.

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The Security Council today expressed deep concern at the continuing blocking of the Danube by two Serbian non-governmental organizations, and deplored the acquiescence of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), as reflected in the fact that they had failed to take any action to prevent those acts.

In a statement read out by its President, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg (Brazil), the Council condemned those deliberate and unjustified acts of interference with the river traffic of several Member States of the United Nations. The Council emphasized the importance of free and unhindered navigation on the Danube, which was essential for legitimate trade in the region. It reminded the Federal Republic of its previous commitment to secure free and safe navigation on "this vital international waterway".

The Council also expressed concern that the Federal Republic continued to impose tolls on foreign vessels transiting the section of the Danube which passed through its territory, in violation of its international obligations. The Council demanded that the authorities and any others imposing similar tolls cease such action immediately. The Council condemned those illegal actions and reaffirmed that it was wholly unacceptable for the Federal Republic to take retaliatory measures in response to action by a State in fulfillment of its obligations under the United Nations Charter. It also demanded that the Federal Republic ensure free movement of international traffic on the Danube.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is due to leave New York today for a visit to Africa, and will meet tomorrow in Cairo with the Secretaries-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, according to a United Nations spokesman. The meeting will also be attended by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Chairman of the OAU.

The meeting would address the role of the regional organizations, of which Somalia was a member, in promoting the political process in that country, the spokesman said. It would also review ways to enhance cooperation between those organizations and the United Nations in accordance with the Charter. The three organizations felt a special responsibility for Somalia and had indicated to the Secretary-General that they were ready to play a role in the process of political reconciliation there.

The Secretary-General would be going to Mauritius to attend the Summit of Francophone States. He also planned to meet with the President of Ethiopia, probably in Addis Ababa, although a schedule for the rest of his visit to Africa had not yet been concluded, the spokesman said.

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General Assembly President Samuel Insanally (Guyana) today described this year's general debate as "remarkable for its vision and sense of purpose in addressing the global agenda for the rest of this century and beyond". In a statement at the conclusion of two and a half weeks of debate, Mr. Insanally said it was encouraging to see widespread optimism about the Organization's capacity to satisfy the expectations and needs of its Membership.

"There seems to be a renewed commitment by all States to the principles and purposes of the Charter and a ready acknowledgement of the concept of interdependence which must now be translated into actual cooperation," Mr. Insanally said. He noted that support for preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peacekeeping, as set out in the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace", was stronger than ever before.

Altogether, 175 countries were represented in the general debate, including 28 by their Heads of State. Nine Member States did not take part in this year's debate: Andorra, Georgia, Madagascar, São Tome and Principe, Somalia, Vanuatu and Zambia, and the two Members barred from participation in the Assembly, South Africa and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

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Resio S. Moses, the Secretary of External Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia, this morning told the General Assembly that in its brief time

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as a Member of the United Nations, his country's experience had demonstrated the strength of concerted international action. Only few years ago, he said, "having barely emerged from colonialism", its best hopes for development lay with dependence for an indefinite period on the generosity of a few bilateral donors. Today, through the work of the United Nations and with Micronesia's participation, the special development needs and environmental exposures of all small island developing States were being carefully addressed in a number of settings. He said his Government had also been encouraged by the ways in which the Organization as a whole had sought to help small States to participate fully in its work.

In this Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, he continued, it was important that the United Nations redouble its efforts to ensure that the peoples of the remaining non-self-governing territories be given every opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination. While the obstacles facing the remaining territories were minor compared to those being confronted so dramatically in Eastern Europe and in Palestine, it remained a moral responsibility to support the right to self-determination for all peoples under colonial administration. "Let us commit ourselves to the complete elimination of colonialism," he said.

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Francis Saemala, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, told the General Assembly today that the solutions to the world's problems might not lie simply in the political, economic or social spheres. In many cases the problems were so complex and deep-seated that supra-human help was needed. A new prescription for true peace must include the development of the spiritual and pastoral well-being of all peoples, he said. The Solomon Islands Government recognized as its first principle "the sovereignty of God as the basis for righteousness, justice and dignity in the development of Solomon Islands and its people". Neither the individual nor society could reach their full potential without the help of God, he said. If God was sovereign in world affairs, would we not be wiser to bring Him into the planning process as well as allowing him a place in the resolution of conflicts? he asked.

Solomon Islands strongly supported the desire of the Republic of China on Taiwan to rejoin the United Nations, he said. As a small, friendly nation with a population of only 300,000, Solomon Islands believed that the desire of Taiwan's 21 million people to have their own representation in the world body was reasonable and justified. He pledged his support for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to examine the question of the Republic of China rejoining the United Nations. Turning to other issues, he expressed concern about the dumping of radioactive and other waste at sea, and urged parties to the 1972 London Convention to actively support a total ban on such dumping.

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Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, said in the general debate this morning that the restoration of

multi-party democracy and respect for fundamental human rights did not mean that his people had solved all their problems. Expectations were high and the country's resources were extremely limited. He said his Government had been striving to ensure a better standard of living for the people with greater freedom, working on the premise that the individual citizen, and not the State, had the right to development. But it was contending with a lack of means, the high cost of infrastructure, a shortage of skilled personnel and institutional deficiences. Nepal looked forward to greater understanding from donor countries and multilateral agencies in providing help, he said.

Nepal's foreign policy, he continued, was guided by the goal of ensuring its sovereignty, political independence and national security, while promoting international peace and cooperation. It sought friendship with all the countries of the world, in particular with its neighbours, and enjoyed excellent relations with them. His country was a partner with its friends in South Asia, he said, in an effort to forge a mutually beneficial scheme of cooperation for the welfare of all their peoples, under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

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Dean Barrow, Belize's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Economic Development and Attorney-General, told the General Assembly today that the brief "hiccup" earlier this year in Guatemala had not seriously flawed that country's efforts at democratization. He expressed satisfaction that the new Government of Guatemala had confirmed its recognition of a sovereign and independent Belize, and said diplomatic relations between the two countries could proceed apace. They would continue to work for the preservation of bilateral and regional security, and to search for a lasting solution to the issues bedevilling them, on the basis of mutual respect for peace, and the rights of self-determination and territorial integrity.

Mr. Barrow went on to say that the overall outlook for world security remained bleak. During the present session, the Assembly could take certain steps to deal with threats to peace and security. He suggested that Governments forswear profiteering from the sale of armaments; that regional and sub-regional systems of cooperation and coordination be expanded in the areas of security, narcotics interdiction and counter-terrorism; and that the Assembly make firm recommendations for the development and enforcement of domestic neutrality laws. The international law relating to neutrality must be modernized to proscribe and punish arms trafficking in all cases of armed conflict, internal or international, he added.

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Gaafar Allagany, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, announced in the general debate today that, despite its own financial burdens, his country had pledged to provide $100 million for 1994 to improve the infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza, in coordination with the World Bank's special five-year programme for the Occupied Territories. He said the welcome which the Palestinian-Israeli agreement had received within

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Palestinian, Arab and international circles clearly reflected the desire of the Arabs for a permanent, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. His Government felt it was incumbent upon the international community to support the progress achieved, by providing the economic and developmental assistance needed to make the agreement on self-government succeed.

He emphasized that his country desired peace and stability in the Middle East so that it could direct all its energies towards development and devote all its resources to the prosperity of its people. Saudi Arabia believed that the goal of making the Middle East a region free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, chemical or biological -- would only be realized when all the States in the region, including Israel, refrained from the production, stockpiling or possession of any such weapons. With respect to Saudi Arabia itself, he said the society was undergoing evolution and significant reforms, in accordance with the Islamic Shari'a. He announced that the members of the Consultative Council and the Provincial Councils had been named, paving the way for Saudi citizens to participate in building a hopeful future for their country.

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Dámaso-Obiang Ndong, Chairman of the Delegation of Equatorial Guinea, told the General Assembly today that his country attached great importance to the work of the United Nations, especially with regard to preventive diplomacy. Prevention was much less costly than intervention after a conflict had broken out. Nevertheless, Equitorial Guinea looked to the future with a degree of concern, in part because of inequitable economic relations. The external debt problem prevented developing countries from improving living standards, he said. The gap between rich and poor was increasing at a disturbing pace and the international community should take action. He urged that the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) be strengthened.

Developed countries bore the greatest responsibility for the deterioration of the global eco-system and had a special responsibility in that regard to developing countries, he continued. They should help developing countries by financing alternative projects and increasing technological cooperation. He went on to say that Equatorial Guinea was committed to democratization and that numerous political parties had received official recognition. Laws had been enacted guaranteeing freedom of association and the right to demonstrate, and a National Pact had been concluded by the Government and the opposition. He condemned attempts to undermine national peace and stability and interference by foreign interests in Equatorial Guinea. Progress could only be achieved with peace, he said.

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Gabriel Baccus Matthews, Foreign Minister of the Interim Government of Liberia, today paid tribute and expressed gratitude to all those who had helped end the civil strife in his country, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and

the United Nations. The dispatch and maintenance of a peace-keeping force in Liberia by ECOWAS represented "the finest hour" for Africa, he said, in its efforts to maintain peace and security on the Continent. The Liberian experience had also demonstrated that peace initiatives conceived and implemented within a subregional context, while supported and assisted by regional and international organizations, stood the best chance of success in conflict resolution.

The Transitional Government, when installed with authority spanning the entire country, would need extensive relief assistance to effectively respond to the monumental human suffering in parts of Liberia, the Foreign Minister said. He envisaged an upsurge in demand for humanitarian assistance, particularly for food and medical supplies, and appealed to the international community to stand ready to help the people of Liberia for some time to come. Assistance would be needed for the massive tasks of the repatriation of refugees, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Transitional Government, he added, would have the task of preparing the country for free and fair elections within six or seven months. That was not ideal timing, but was the best that the could be produced in the negotiated settlement. The international community, he said, had a moral obligation to help the Liberians succeed in that endeavour, because the very thought of failure was a nightmare.

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Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of Samoa, told the General Assembly yesterday that peace-keeping operations alone could not sustain peace without attention to the root causes of conflicts. Poverty and the denial of human rights were the real problems. Development and democratic reforms were essential to prevent political and social crises and should be a major focus for the Organization. Samoa believed in the importance of human rights in all United Nations activities and welcomed the Declaration and Programme of Action produced by the World Conference on Human Rights. The Conference had made a major contribution to the promotion of human rights, especially by recognizing development as a human right. He said Samoa supported the creation of a United Nations high commissioner for human rights.

Peace, stability and the preservation of the environment were crucial to the South Pacific region, he continued. Samoa wanted an end to nuclear testing, the dumping of chemical and toxic wastes and the transportation of those materials in its waters. He urged the nuclear Powers to accede to the protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Environmental security was crucial as small island States and low lying atolls were isolated and ecologically fragile. Without international cooperation and an integrated approach, the outlook was not promising. Next year's Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States would present an opportunity to implement "Agenda 21" and reaffirm the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

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Francis Alexis, Grenada's Attorney-General and Minister for CARICOM Affairs, told the General Assembly yesterday that the problems of developing countries were still daunting. Grenada continued to pursue its own structural adjustment programme, and its people had shown great understanding and cooperation. However, prolonged difficulties in the economic sector could create conditions that could adversely affect social development. He called on the international community to show greater flexibility in assisting the adjustment process in Grenada and in other countries with similar economic conditions. Poverty, debt, inadequate resources, marginalization and a lack of secure markets for their products undermined social, economic and political stability in those countries, he stressed.

Free trade was not always synonymous with fair trade, he went on to say. Factors of size, resource endowment and levels of development must be considered in settling trade relations. That was particularly so with small, open, primary-producing economies where one serious natural disaster, such as a hurricane, could be devastating. Concessioned trade was needed for a level playing field. "Developing countries will not progress on sympathy; they require equity. Small countries like Grenada cannot do it all alone," he said. They needed assistance for diversification, the development of human resources and the implementation of sustainable development, he stressed.

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Nyemba Mbekeani, Malawi's Minister of Trade and Industry, told the General Assembly yesterday that he was thankful that Malawi had experienced good rains this season. The drought of the last two seasons had had devastating effects in southern Africa. In 1991, Malawi's gross domestic product (GDP) had grown by 7.8 per cent; in 1992, it had declined by 7.9 per cent. Complete recovery from the drought would take some time. He thanked the United Nations, particularly the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the bilateral donors and the non-governmental organizations who had "saved the day" for Malawi and southern Africa with massive imports of food, medicines and other humanitarian supplies. However, he noted that his country still had to confront a major balance-of-payments deficit problem arising from the large volume of maize imported during the drought.

The problem of the Mozambican refugees in Malawi, a consequence of the civil war between the Government and the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO), would end when the protocols of the General Peace Accord were implemented in full, he continued. He urged the Government and RENAMO to work closely together and with the United Nations to ensure that peace and political stability were firmly established in Mozambique. Malawi had suffered tremendously from the 16-year civil war in that country. He said priority should be given to the demining programme, demobilizing the armed forces and placing them in designated assembly areas, and to finalizing discussions on the draft electoral law.

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Yashar Aliyev, Acting Chairman of the Azerbaijani Delegation, said in the General Assembly yesterday that his country was following the only true path to independence by building a democratic society and a market economy. Unfortunately, incidents of extreme nationalism had been used to undermine democracy. The nationalist elements in Armenia had waged war against Azerbaijan to fulfil their territorial claims. Twenty per cent of Azerbaijan was now occupied by Armenian troops, and about 1 million people had been forced to leave their homes. Large areas of the country and unique historical sites had been destroyed. Azerbaijan sought a peaceful settlement of the dispute. He welcomed Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993), which called for the unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from Azerbaijan. He also welcomed the Minsk timetable, which called for urgent efforts to implement the Security Council resolutions. Azerbaijan was committed to applying Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) decisions, he said.

Azerbaijan had well-developed industries and was rich in natural resources, he continued. It could overcome its economic difficulties, but many of its people had become refugees because of the conflict and humanitarian aid was of great importance. He thanked the organizations and Governments who had aided the Azerbaijani people and welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Interim Office in his country.

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